III. REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-12, 14, 16-23 and 25-31 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claims 1, 11, 18, 25, 26 and 31 have been amended. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-2, 4-12, 14, 16-23 and 25-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Burks *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,644,778), hereafter "Burks." Applicants assert that Burks does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention. For example, with respect to independent claims 1, 11, 18 and 26, Applicants submit that Burks fails to teach or suggest a transaction element sent from a first trading partner intended for a second trading partner. The medical transaction system in Burks uses information, which has been transmitted thereto from a plurality of healthcare provider computer stations, each of which may use a different communication protocol. Col. 3, lines 8-13; col. 5, lines 22-25. The information is then complied into generic records having a format that is independent of the communication protocol and format of the data messages. Col. 3, lines 8-17; col. 5, lines 27-35. The generic format records are stored within the medical transaction system memory or in a database associated with the system. Col. 5, lines 45-48. The medical transaction system in Burks periodically extracts medical records that correspond to one of the trading partners, formats the records to correspond with the format of the trading partner, and transmits the

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formatted records to the trading partner. Col. 3, lines 17-25, col. 5, lines 48-60. To this extent, it is the medical transaction system of Burks, and not the original information sender that determines if and to whom the formatted records are sent. In contrast, the present invention includes "...a transaction element sent from a first trading partner intended for a second trading partner." Claim 1. As such, the first trading partner does not send a record to a system that then determines whether and to whom to send the information, but instead the transaction element that the first trading partner sends is intended for a second trading partner. Thus, the transaction element that is intended for a second trading partner as included in the present invention is not equivalent to the information that is sent to the medical transaction system of Burks. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.
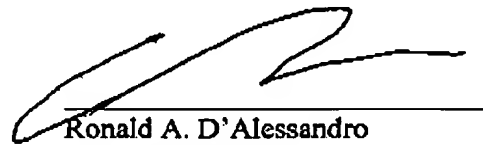
With respect to dependent claims, Applicants herein incorporate the arguments presented above with respect to the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend. Furthermore, Applicants submit that all dependant claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. Since the cited art does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

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IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 15, 2004

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Ronald A. D'Alessandro
Reg. No.: 42,456

Hoffman, Warnick & D'Alessandro LLC
Three E-Comm Square
Albany, New York 12207
(518) 449-0044
(518) 449-0047 (fax)

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